



GLOBAL FOOD INITIATIVE

E-news of the Global Food Initiative

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WINTER 2018



Ohio: Potsdam Community Garden Celebration

In August, the Potsdam (Ohio) Church of the Brethren held its second annual Corn Fest. Pastor Carl Hill reports that over 100 people attended, many who were not church members. The festival included live music. Fresh produce from the church's community garden was served. The GFI has provided two \$1,000 grants to support this effort.

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Haiti: Beans, Fish and Coffee

A collaboration between Eglise des Freres d' Haiti (Church of the Brethren in Haiti), Foods Resource Bank and the GFI is only in its first year but beginning to bear fruit. Staff for Eglise des Freres are busy installing fish ponds, tree nurseries, distributing goats for a "passing on the gift" style animal project, and much more. This program is underway in 10 communities, with 25 farmers in each community. The focus is on soil conservation and income generation.



Burundi: Farming God's Way

A grant totaling \$8,944 was given to Trauma Healing and Reconciliation Services (THARS) for its work teaching farming to members of the Batwa tribe in Burundi. The GFI has provided grants for the past 3 years to this project. THARS director, Dr. David Niyonzima, reports impressive yields using a technique called Farming God's Way (FGW). Using mulch, compost, and proper spacing of seeds at planting, farmers are reporting harvests of up to 10 times the harvest using traditional farming methods. FGW encourages care for creation through Bible-based teachings on stewardship. To date, THARS has trained approximately 100 farmers in its Farmer Field School for Sustainable Development activities. Each farmer is encouraged to share knowledge with neighbors, so when family members and neighbors are included, THARS estimates that over 3,000 people have been positively impacted through this project to date.

Ecuador: New Grant

The GFI recently awarded a \$5,000 grant to Fundacion Brethren y Unida (FBU) in Ecuador. Funds will be used to support FBU's Indigenous Food Crops project, and will go for the purchase of seed, vegetable seedlings, and organic fertilizer. Community trainings, and "ferrias" or farmers' markets, will be organized in 5 communities. The project will seek to engage young adults ages 25-35 to encourage them to remain on family farms. FBU is part of a national alliance in Ecuador to promote healthy food and is actively involved in the Slow Food movement.



This follows a grant of \$3,000 given to FBU in 2017. A report from FBU shows that they were able to exceed their expectations for the year. FBU staff organized 8 workshops for 400 participants in 4 communities. Together, staff and participants established 9 demonstration gardens and planted 1850 trees.

The Church of the Brethren was involved in the founding of FBU in 1953, and works in the Tabacundo section, about 41 kilometers from Quito. GFI manager, Jeff Boshart, has been invited to serve as a member of FBU's board of directors as a way of reestablishing ties between the Church of the Brethren and FBU.



Virginia: World Hunger Auction

On August 11, 2018, over 100 people gathered at the Antioch (Va.) Church of the Brethren to open their hearts and wallets to assist people in need both locally and internationally. This year marked the 35th anniversary of the event. Along with the auction, other activities are held throughout the year. The total raised this year was more than \$31,000. Funds are shared with Heifer International, the Global Food Initiative (GFI) as well as local organizations.

Nigeria Soy Consultation or U of IL SIL update

In September, GFI manager Jeff Boshart traveled to Nigeria accompanied by Dr. Dennis Thompson of the University of Illinois, and Dr. Steven Petcher of Petcher Seed Company, Fruitdale, Alabama. The delegation was hosted by the Soybean Value Chain Team, that is made up of agricultural professionals who are all members of Ekklesiyar Yan'uwa a Nigeria. This team is made up primarily of volunteers who have been working with farmers in the promotion of soybeans as a cash crop, as well as for household consumption. The project is funded primarily through a \$25,000 allocation from the Nigeria Crisis Fund of the Church of the Brethren with staff support from the GFI. During this week-long consultation, the team was able to visit farmers to hear testimonies of the value of this project. Rains have been good this year and the harvest looks to be exceptional. One farmer from the town of Golantabal sold his crop from last season and exclaimed, "I enjoyed the money I received from the sale of my soybeans very much!" The president of a women's cooperative near Abuja shared that the cooperative has added both members and acreage this year as growing soybeans is profitable. The cooperative is planning to start a business selling processed soy foods.

